

Consumer Demand For Buying Locally Grown Strong In Delaware

DOVER, Del. (January 11, 2022) – Today, the Delaware Department of Agriculture announced that Delaware farmers' markets had nearly \$3.16 million in sales in 2021. As the second-highest sales year on record for Delaware's farmers' markets, 2021 has proven demand for buying locally grown products is strong among residents and visitors to the state.

A return to a more normal season could be one of the contributing factors to the success of Delaware farmers' markets. However, Secretary of Agriculture Michael T. Scuse credits the connections made throughout 2020 when residents relied on family farms to provide produce, meat, fresh eggs, honey, and more.

"When the pandemic first hit, people quickly realized that food wasn't readily available at their grocery stores. For many Delawareans, it was their first time reaching out to a farm or visiting a farmers' market, so they could put food on their table," said Scuse. "We hoped consumers would pick up in 2021, where they left off in 2020, realizing farmers play a significant role in providing fresh, nutritious products grown right here in Delaware. And they did."

Sales from 18 Delaware community-run farmers' markets this year totaled \$3,159,175. Three farmers' markets did not provide sales figures, which would have likely put sales closer to the 2019 record. Fresh produce made up 55 percent of total sales. The remainder came from products such as meats, cheeses, jellies, bread, salsa, eggs, or honey.

"This past year, we saw several new farmers' markets open, offering more opportunities for both customers and vendors,"

said Kathy Jackson, DDA Marketing Specialist. “We also experienced a change in the length of our market season this year. With great weather and a bountiful growing season, consumers wanted to take advantage of all the fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, and other items that local farms had to offer. So, we had several established markets expand into late Fall to benefit both the consumer and the farmer.”

In 2021, 13 markets participated in the Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program and the Women, Infants, and Children Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program. The Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program had its highest participation since Delaware began offering these benefits. Seven markets participated in the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP). These programs help expand access for low-income residents to purchase fresh local produce at Delaware farmers’ markets.

Delaware farmers’ markets are run locally by municipalities, business groups, farmers, or market associations. The Department of Agriculture provides support and marketing assistance.

The 2022 market season will begin in April; most markets start operations in May and June. A current list of the 2021 markets is online at Delaware Grown, <https://delawaregrown.com>, and will be updated in late March for the 2022 season.

Farmers and others interested in becoming a vendor, or community groups interested in starting a local market, can contact Department of Agriculture marketing specialist Kathy Jackson at (302) 698-4625 or by email kathy.jackson@delaware.gov.

Delaware Farmers’ Market Sales:

2021: \$3,159,175

2020: \$1,949,593

2019: \$3,277,788

2018: \$2,883,702

2017: \$3,004,174
2016: \$2,901,081
2015: \$3,029,831
2014: \$2,636,727
2013: \$2,107,265
2012: \$1,960,357
2011: \$1,794,265
2010: \$1,330,617
2009: \$1,121,024
2008: \$800,679
2007: \$289,706

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